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EPA Outlines Expectations for Next Phase of Chesapeake Bay Restoration Effort

PHILADELPHIA (June 19, 2018) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent letters to Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia outlining what the agency expects to see in state and local implementation plans for the third phase of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

“The Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans, or WIPs, will provide clear roadmaps for how federal, state and local partners will work together to achieve their Bay TMDL nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment reduction goals,” said EPA Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio. **“EPA worked with the seven Bay jurisdictions in developing the expectations for these plans.”**

To date, the states and the District of Columbia have made progress on their phase I and II goals, and that progress is having a measurable impact. For example, in 2017, scientists recorded the highest number of acres of underwater grasses ever seen in the watershed and the first time in the history of monitoring that total abundance surpassed 100,000 acres. In addition, over 40 percent of our tidal waters are now meeting water quality standards, also the highest recorded in the history of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

The expectations included in today’s letters were developed to support the goal of having all the practices and controls in place by 2025 to achieve the nutrient and sediment reductions necessary to meet water quality standards in the Bay and its tidal tributaries. They also build on the jurisdictions’ earlier WIP strategies by:

- further optimizing their choices of pollution reduction practices;
- incorporating the lessons learned from previous efforts, new science and information from the mid-point assessment;
- developing comprehensive local engagement strategies; and
- building and sustaining the necessary programmatic and funding capacity to achieve their 2025 goals.

These expectations also incorporate recent decisions made by the Chesapeake Bay Partnership Principals Staff Committee (PSC), which includes the seven Bay jurisdictions, EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. These decisions address changed conditions due to Conowingo Dam infill, growth and climate.

Background

In December 2010, EPA established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load or Bay TMDL. The Bay TMDL is the largest ever developed by EPA, encompassing a 64,000-square-mile watershed. The Bay TMDL identifies the necessary pollution reductions from major sources of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across the Bay jurisdictions necessary to meet water quality standards.

Based on a 2009 baseline, the Bay TMDL calls for watershed-wide reductions of 25 percent for nitrogen, 24 percent for phosphorus and 20 percent for sediment to meet these standards.

The Bay TMDL is designed to ensure that all pollution control measures needed to fully restore the Bay and its tidal rivers are in place by 2025. The Phase III WIPS will outline the jurisdictions' pollution reduction strategies for the time period from 2018-2025.

For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl>